

JOURNEY TO PLANET EARTH

DISPATCHES FROM THE GULF

Science • Community • Recovery

**A New Documentary Investigates the Impact of the
Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill**

Narrated by Matt Damon

Sneak Peek Screening via Live Stream on April 20, 2016

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/j2planetearth/d1-trailer>

For more information, to obtain digital screeners, or to schedule interviews,
contact Nora Zelevansky at screenscope@screenscope.com or 202-364-0055.

ABOUT THE FILM

The environmental devastation of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010 sparked the largest coordinated oceanic research effort in history as contamination spread across the Gulf of Mexico. An international community of scientists joined forces to understand and mitigate the impacts of petroleum pollution.

“Dispatches from the Gulf” takes viewers on an underwater journey deep below the Gulf of Mexico aboard manned submersibles, on research vessels navigating rough seas, and inside CSI-type laboratories demonstrating how research helps us remedy even our most disastrous failures.

- On April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon drilling platform exploded, taking 11 lives and, over the course of 87 days, releasing more than 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. The disaster was the largest offshore oil spill in U.S. history and put millions of citizens and a vital ecosystem in serious jeopardy.
- Produced by award-winning filmmakers Marilyn and Hal Weiner, this illuminating new documentary follows teams of scientists as they investigate the oil spill’s effect on the world’s ninth largest body of water. The group’s ongoing, ultimate goal is to discover new and better ways to mitigate and cope with future spills. Their collective studies have become the largest coordinated oceanographic research endeavor in history. ***“I go out and try to figure out who’s winning this war of nature versus oil,”*** summarizes Dr. Chris Reddy, senior scientist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, one participating organization.
- Narrated by Matt Damon, *“Dispatches from the Gulf”* is the newest episode in the Journey to Planet Earth public television series and considers the socio-cultural implications as well as scientific findings. The documentary examines the impact of the BP oil spill on local communities: from citizens who enjoy the Gulf recreationally — to those who depend on tourism for their livelihood — to families who rely on Gulf seafood for their sustenance. ***“If ever a light bulb went off in all of our minds, it was that our economy is totally dependent on a clean, safe, useable environment,”*** stresses Mayor Robert Craft of Gulf Shores, Alabama. ***“That is still our biggest concern.”***

- The film also captures instances of exciting innovation: biologists and oceanographers use remotely operated vehicles and manned submersibles to study the effects of the oil on the ocean floor; chemists and engineers who design new laboratory techniques to understand the impact of the spill on fish species and how chemical dispersants interact with oil.

ABOUT THE DISPATCHES EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE

The *Dispatches Educational Initiative* is a collection of multimedia resources exploring the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon disaster. A global team of scientists is working together to protect and restore one of our planet's most valuable natural resources – the Gulf of Mexico. Their ultimate goal is to develop new strategies for coping with the repercussions of future oil spills.

Resources include DVDs of the feature documentary, short videos, podcasts, educators' guides, lesson plans, posters, and other classroom materials.

All materials are free of charge to educators, public libraries, science centers, museums, and environmental organizations. There are partnership opportunities for exclusive screenings and lectures featuring scientists from the films. For more information, visit <https://dispatchesfromthegulf.com>.

ABOUT JOURNEY TO PLANET EARTH

Journey to Planet Earth is an award-winning documentary series that dramatizes new ways of looking at the delicate relationship between people and the world they inhabit. It is designed to help viewers understand and cope with the most important environmental issues of the 21st century. Through an interdisciplinary approach, these programs reach beyond the physical sciences and draw connections to politics, economics, sociology, and history. "*Dispatches from the Gulf*" is the 14th episode in the series. Additional series information is available at <https://www.pbs.org/journeytoplanetearth>.

ABOUT MATT DAMON

Matt Damon has been honored for his work on both sides of the camera, winning a Golden Globe Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture - Musical or Comedy for "*The Martian*." He was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role for the same film. Earlier in his career, Damon won an Academy Award for Best Screenplay and received an Oscar nomination for Best Actor, both for his breakthrough feature "*Good Will Hunting*." Damon is the co-founder of water.org, a non-profit organization that works to bring safe drinking water and sanitation options to the billions of people who lack access.

ABOUT MARILYN & HAL WEINER

Marilyn and Hal Weiner have produced, written, and directed more than 225 documentaries and several public television series, including Journey to Planet Earth, Women at Work, and The World of Cooking. They won Emmy Awards for "*The Earth Summit Pledge*," and "*Streets of Sorrow*." The Weiners have also produced three feature films: "*Family Business*," "*The Imagemaker*," and "*K2*." They are recipients of the National Academy of Television Arts and Science's Silver Circle Award for "outstanding contributions to the television industry."

ABOUT THE FUNDERS

The *Dispatches Educational Initiative* is made possible by generous grants from the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GoMRI), the Wallace Genetic Foundation, and the Farvue Foundation.

The mission of **GoMRI** is to implement an independent research program that will (1) study the effects of the Deepwater Horizon incident and the potential associated impact of this and similar incidents on the environment and public health and (2) develop improvements for spill mitigation, oil detection and characterization, and advanced remediation technologies. GoMRI's goal is to improve society's ability to understand, respond to, and mitigate the impacts of petroleum pollution and related stressors of the marine and coastal ecosystems.

The **Wallace Genetic Foundation** focuses on improving the quality of life for all people through long-term environmental conservation.

The **Farvue Foundation** is dedicated to finding solutions for a more sustainable environment.

USA, 2016, 56 min.

Download the complete **Press Kit** at <http://screenscope.com/press-gulf-dispatches.html>

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